

Sylvia's Table

A Review by NANCY MATSUMOTO

"Sylvia's Table" is the perfect book for die-hard greenmarket enthusiasts, especially parents who want to introduce their children to the joys of preparing and eating locally grown food. Brimming with imaginative recipes for farmers' market and CSA staples such as beets, kale, squash and potatoes, the book also serves as a primer for novice cooks on how to select, prepare and preserve the season's bounty.

The book features great ideas and useful tips for kids, many taken from the playbook of the Sylvia Center, the nonprofit farm-to-table program in the Hudson River Valley founded by Liz Neumark, CEO of the Manhattan catering company Great Performances. The center's mission is to introduce good food and nutrition to children on the farm and in the kitchen. Suggestions in the cookbook include first lessons in chopping vegetables using plastic paring knives

and garden-fresh cucumbers, and planting seeds in biodegradable planters made from newspaper that has been shaped around the base of a wine bottle.

Great Performance's 60-acre organic Katchkie Farm serves as the Sylvia Center's demonstration garden and living campus. The center was Neumark's way of turning tragedy into a force for good, or as she puts it, "farming with a social cause." Three years after the youngest of her four children, Sylvia, passed away suddenly, Neumark knew how she wanted to honor Sylvia's wish to "do good" in the world.

Neumark's thirty years in the food business have brought with them friendships with pioneering chefs and farmers, many of whom — Deborah Madison, Bill Telepan and Katchkie's own amazing farmer, Bob Walker, to name a few — have contributed recipes to this beautiful book.



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